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SUBJECT: Security Minister on Police Reform and Public Outreach

REF: NAIROBI 2401; NAIROBI 2369

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - ENTIRE TEXT.

¶1. Summary: Following up on the Ambassador's meetings with Minister of Security Saitoti, DCM Lee Brudvig met with the minister on February 3 to discuss his request for assistance with police reform efforts. In addition to presenting a list of requests for his ministry (ranging from additional police vehicles to guns to development assistance), Saitoti emphasized first and foremost his desire to have the United States assist his efforts to improve public perception of his ministry. The DCM emphasized that any public relations strategy must be built on genuine reform, and offered continued assistance in implementation of the reform agenda alongside assistance with PR strategy. The DCM presented an opportunity for a member of Kenya's security services to attend the FBI's National Academy (FBINA) and reiterated our longstanding offer to embed an FBI officer within Kenyan Police Services Anti-Terrorism Unit. Saitoti's stated desire to improve the image of his ministry, combined with his presidential ambitions, provide an opportunity to further advance our interests in the security sector, linking our support for improving public relations to genuine reform in areas of internal and external oversight, community policing, and rule of law. End summary.

MINISTER WANTS TO REVAMP POLICE IMAGE

¶2. On February 3, Minister of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security George Saitoti and Permanent Secretary Francis Kimemia met with DCM Lee Brudvig to discuss Saitoti's request for assistance in improving the public perception of the ministry of internal security. Minister Saitoti began the meeting by referencing the report of the National Task Force on Police Reform (NTFPR) (see ref B), stressing the need to improve accountability, and asserting that recommendations from the NTFPR were being implemented. However, he stressed several times his primary interest in U.S. assistance was in the area of improving the police's public relations outreach and strategy.

¶3. When asked by the DCM how the security services were viewed, Saitoti said he was "trying to reform police that don't have a very good name." He then highlighted several areas for potential reform, the first of which was changing police culture so that "the police are seen by the people as having a friendly role for them," thus ensuring people feel comfortable and safe reporting issues to the police. He also discussed a need for more vehicles, both to better patrol the border with Somalia and to respond more quickly to crimes throughout Kenya. As evidence of reform, Saitoti said he had changed the senior leadership within the police department, but conceded that the public still needed to see more change within the police system. He stated that in order to conduct public diplomacy, he wanted to hire a PR firm, but would need money to do

so. He asked what the United States was willing to do to help, but said he did not want the United States to be seen as being "in the driver's seat" on police reform.

¶4. The DCM referenced Ambassador Ranneberger's efforts to reach out to Kenyan youth, and spoke of the importance of both youth and rural populations, arguing that genuine reform and public outreach are matters of "political necessity." Saitoti commended Ambassador Ranneberger for "his excellent work that we much appreciate." He noted that he is also working with other ministries on development strategies, most notably a food security strategy. He said that he has appropriated a large amount of money to fast-track organizational and legislative reforms but needs help in implementing programs and building capacity, something he said he cannot do without external assistance and advice. He noted that he also plans to approach other donors. In response, the DCM noted our willingness to assist, but stressed that Kenyan authorities must come up with compelling messages derived from real actions.

COUNTER-TERRORISM CCOORDINATION

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¶5. The DCM suggested two specific "confidence building" partnership initiatives: (1) Offering an opportunity for a senior member of the Kenyan security services to attend the FBI's National Academy (FBINA) training in Quantico, and/or (2) Embedding an FBI officer within the Kenyan security services in order to facilitate capacity building and intelligence sharing, focusing on counter terrorism. Saitoti thanked the DCM for the offers, and said he was "quite happy" to have someone attend FBINA. Regarding the offer of an embedded FBI officer, Saitoti said that anti-terrorism efforts in Kenya lack sophistication and capacity, but that he saw the embedded FBI officer as a way of formalizing initial steps that had already been taken by GOK and the United States. The permanent secretary then reminded Saitoti of existing United States programs supporting internal security, and both he and Saitoti repeated their request for more financial assistance, especially with regard to border security.

OTHER REQUESTS

¶6. Kimemia and Saitoti requested additional funding for (1) disaster management, especially with regard to training; (2) crime scene management; (3) community policing, especially with regard to cattle rustling in the Northern provinces; and (4) overall economic development as a means to offer economic alternatives to youth. Regarding community policing, the permanent secretary said it is an effective model for Kenya, citing detection of third country nationals illegally present in Kenya and drug trafficking concerns as areas where community policing could be especially effective. Saitoti said he was very happy with progress regarding community policing, but then returned to broader development goals, saying "We give you a broad menu, because as Americans you have a broad capacity for it." He then referenced Undersecretary Otero's emphasis on youth development, and said microfinance for youth was an effective program and asked for more partnership from the United States in that area. Finally, the permanent secretary also asked the DCM if the United States would donate firearms to the security services.

NEXT STEPS

¶7. The DCM offered to discuss these issues with both the Public Diplomacy section and Military Information Support Team and bring

them to a future meeting to be held soon, along with legal, military, and security advisors. (Note: Post hopes to include the members of the upcoming INL law enforcement sector assessment team in these discussions.) Additionally, the DCM said he would communicate with the permanent secretary to arrange a meeting with a broad range of Embassy representatives to brainstorm, and LEGATT would reach out to the permanent secretary regarding FBI officer embedding and FBINA.

COMMENT

18. Saitoti clearly wants to work more closely with the United States in an effort to get out front on police reform and ride the wake of our successful outreach efforts, but to do so in a discreet way that allows him to distinguish himself and his ministry. He continues to express support for the reform agenda, but it remains to be seen the extent to which he seeks genuine reform. Saitoti has made it clear that he harbors presidential ambitions for 2012. However, his ministry is viewed as one of most corrupt in Kenya, and he recognizes that he must be perceived as a reformer in order to mount a viable candidacy. He also recognizes that he cannot achieve his objectives without our support and perceives the United States as an essential partner. This opens a window of opportunity for us to advance our security and development objectives, insisting on a "quid pro quo" approach where ramping up of our efforts is married to - and contingent upon - progress on reform in areas of special interest, such as community policing, implementation of internal affairs and oversight mechanisms, and training regarding basic police skills and professionalism, police ethics, codes of conduct, and use of force policies (see ref A).

19. We are encouraged by Saitoti's commitment to community policing

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and see this as an obvious area of overlap between his objectives and ours. Saitoti has also expressed support for increased training and oversight as a means to improve the security services' image. We remain convinced that establishing effective internal and external police oversight mechanisms is absolutely essential to real police reform, and will continue to urge Saitoti and the newly-appointed members of the Police Reform Implementation Commission to tackle difficult issues like police corruption and excessive use of force. Post respectfully reiterates its request for additional funding (see ref A) to support essential reforms within the police and security services. End comment.
RANNEBERGER